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Huger
Waifs from the
wayside.

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WAIFS FROM THE WAYSIDE.

BY

VERNON REVIER,
Arthur Dereron Huger
One of the Free and Independent Order of Tramps, a Hobo of the Highlands.

September 1923.

CARE V. L. EDWARDS,
BURNSVILLE, N. C.

PREFACE

TO WAIFS OF THE WAYSIDE.

The *Captious Critic's* comment, likely enough, would be; the proper Preface to any collection of Verse by one not even included in the WHO-WHOS (and that is largely a list of the LITTLE) should be an abject APOLOGY for trespassing on the patience of a Public, engaged in the more serious task of *Politics* or *Profiteering*, as the first gives us our glorious CONSTITUTION, and the second our Gilded CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY.

If I were offering a volume of "VERS LIBRES," or of *Capitalized Prose* (chop'd into chunks, and a "Capital letter" heading each line), I should "plead guilty," return to my plow and patch-and-pittance: but after all, I believe even *monkeying* with the *Muse*," a far more innocent employment than cultivating *wholesale murder*, and NOT *whole-souled millionaires*, which seems to be now, the chief Industries of our *sanctified* CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.

Besides how are we to discover who are the Laureates, and who the "Lame Ducks"; unless we give even the *Parvenus* a chance to show whether they should be admitted into the ranks of the *Patricians* or not? If all the *Beginners black ball'd*, there might be some "mute inglorious millions" excluded along with the SHINING SHAM'S *self-glorification*, heard above the roofs of the world.—If the CROWNED CRITICS had had their way, *Keats*, *Byron*, *Fitzgerald;* indeed some of our noblest Poets would

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have long since "been out of print." In fact one of the noteworthy things in studying the LITERARY ORACLES of the Past; is to discover how many "Lame Ducks" turned out to be "Swans"; and what a large number of *patronized Paragons* turned out to be only *presumptuous Poetasters*.

However, I shall frankly confess, POETRY, like MUSIC, can't well be *standardized;* both depend largely on EAR. Tho' I may *amuse* myself WRESTLING with RHYME, I believe it takes intellectual faculties of a higher sort to compose really *Fine Prose*, than it does to write Beautiful Poetry, as the last depends largely on SOUND, and the first so much more on SENSE. In my Philosophy, which is essentially *Peripatetic* (I am a far more enthusiastic *Rambler* than *Rhymer*), SENSE is very much more important than SOUND: yet just as the Popes pretend to be "Vicars of Christ", so does every little "Doctor of Ditties," pretend to be an inspired Prophet loaded up with metrical messages from Paradise as well as Parnassus. They remind me always of those ANGELIC ASSES—the SOUR SAINTS, who claim to be both more *Sensible* and more SOBER than their OWN SAVIOR. As a SINGER, I shall not deny I have worshiped at the Shrine of SAINT SAUTERNE; but that by no means proves that I am a SALOON SOAKER. Like JESUS, I hold that Temperance is moderation, not *mania*. Fanatics are always Intemperate, Intolerant and Fools:—with due apologies to Wm. J. B. and Volstead, the Virtuous. Even St. Peter showed that he prefered PUNCH to PILLS; and I dare to hope some "*punch*" will be found in my *prose*, even if my verses not very *vinous*.

But "to return my muttons," as my old friends in the "Students Quarter" would say, when I die (as an American, tho' by no means 100 per cent) I hope to go to PARIS instead of PARADISE; and perhaps that is the real reason why, tho' a SINNER, I dread death less than the SAINTS. At any rate, when *ailing*, I find the D. D.s always in a hurry to hunt up the Doctor;—I only when the exasperating ACHES begin: but luckily thus far, if my *Aches* are few, so are my "*aches*;" despite the fact that I love now and then a "sip,"—but I detest a "soak." No doubt most of these *passionate* PROHIBITIONISTS are *Repentant Rum Roosters:* and can't believe that the vast majority of Human Beings are not *Misfits*, or *Maniacs*. *Degenerates* can't believe in *Decency*.

When you find a fellow with the true Plymouth Rock Passion for prying into one's Neighbors' privacies;—it is the *Trickster*, who believing himself a good deal better than most, convinced nearly everybody else is tricky.

In conclusion, I wish to say, that I do not pretend that my verses are *Inspired;* in fact I don't believe what most folks call GENIUS is anything but INTELLIGENCE, aided by *Imagination*, some Energy and an enjoyment of Real Hard Work. Frankly I prefer Rambling to Writing, not exactly the Plough to the Pen (*Dam Ploughing*), but put me in the Wild Woods (not the burlesque wilderness of a "Walden Pond," 2 miles from a village and 200 yards from a R. R. line) with a good axe, and a mountain like "Whitesides," (only 4950 ft., but grandest Precipice East of "Rockeys") *Isundayga*, to climb by the sometimes risky "U. G." Trail; well, honestly that is what I prefer to Parnassus, even to Paris;—and *potage a la bisque*.

As I am having my Rhymes (call them rubbish, if you will, that will not ruffle me) printed, it would be affectation to pretend, I do not like my own *progeny*, more truly my own "creations," than those little "kids," that proud mamas love to send for an airing on some fashionable promenade, decorated in their best bib and tucker, even if they are, (as often) pug-nosed, pimple faced and far more red than than rosy.

One thing is certain, even if my Pets spanked by the Proud Critics (privately no doubt I will say, they are a Dam site more cross than Crowned)—they will never kick and squall; but whatever they may think, will, between covers, keep *discreetly silent*. I propose giving my "pugs" a show too on the Promenade.

But look out, you *Literary Lordlings;*—I am somewhat of an expert as a *Sharp-shooter*, and tho' it may be only a Popgun, I have set a whole village *shivering* with SHAME, tho my Ammunition only *Squibs* and *Lampoons:* the Explosion however suggested "T.N.T."—There is one excuse I cannot give for thus rashly, perhaps, Plunging into Print: most *Beginners* so *Bashful* nothing could induce them to let their *Maidenly Muse* show her shy shins in public, but ADMIRING *Friends* have pushed and persisted and persuaded. My Friends not only few and far between, but I never bored them with my *Balladry;* and as to my own Family, they are so eminently respectable, they would socially lose caste (*at least in the South*) if even a "Laureate" discovered loose in their LOT.

VERNON REVIER,
of the "F. I. O. T."

METRICAL MAY TIME!

Through all the bleak season when it snows,
Content am I with just plain prose,
I stick to facts and slight all fiction;
But when the Spring its bliss bestows,
And gardens gathering rose after rose,
Somehow again poetic diction
Begins at once its old time powers.
Once more I'm lured by lilting lines,
Once more I pray at Fancy's shrines,
And Time brings back idyllic hours.
My only tears are April Showers,
I read the leaves of boughs—not books,
Find rhymes in all the running brooks,
And so the joyous May-time dowers
My life with songs the glad birds sing
Through all the revelries of Spring.

—Rosary of Ridges.

MY CALENDAR OF FLOWERS!

I mark the fickle flight of Time
  Not by years—months—days or hours:
My chronicles I write in rhyme,
  My Calendar is one of—Flowers.

When Epigea's blushes show
I know that March winds blustering blow;
When Dog-woods whiten day by day
Shy April's woo'd by warmer May.

In June red Roses at their best
And July shows on many a crest
The Chestnuts billowing into foam;
And Poppies crown the Harvest Home.

The glint of Golden-rod betrays
The coming of Autumnal Days,
And when the woods grow sere and sober
Still purpling Asters check October.

After that, even in bleak November,
Though now we light the friendly ember,
Still by the road-side's russet green
The modest Chick-weed's stars are seen.

Though wild the winds November sends,
Not even then my Flowering Record ends,
For—where unfettered brooks still leap,
Behold the Gentian's blue eyes shyly peep.

Then Christmas time, forever merry,
Shall bring the Holly's crimson berry,
And despite even New Year's snow,
Witch Hazel's gold and pearls of Mistletoe.

So thus my Records ever run,
  With flowers to greet all friendly comers;
He—who would doubts and darkness shun,
  WINTERS forgets—and counts by—SUMMERS.

TO THE COMMON CHICK-WEED!

Stellaria—star-wort—fitter name
Than many prouder flowers can claim,
For Botanists prefer to brand
With labels none can understand.

They best love Burials of Bloom,
The fairest flowers in the gloom
Of some Herbarium ever thrust,
With Latin epitaphs to bless their dust.

Tho' now no longer Asters gleam,
No Gentians blue by winding stream,
And Roses long ago have died
In gardens where rare Violets hide:

Tho' vain Narcissus nods in sleep,
No Daisies thro' green grasses peep,
Nor Alders their brown tassels hang
By brooks where the cat-bird sang;

By russet hedge—or rugged hill
The modest Chick-weed blossoms still,—
Fair white stars that twinkling show
Beside the foot-falls of the snow.

The "Daisies daring" poets sing,
But they bide cautiously 'til Spring,
Yet here, thro' Winters's wildest hours,
You'll find the Chick-weed's modest flowers.

Proud Laureates spurn thee as a weed,
But I, whose songs no grand folks read,
A singer of rough, rustic ways
Dare give thee of my pittance—praise.

This wee, small weed, that dares the snow,
Still glad and green tho' wild winds blow,
If—like my songs no fame hath won—
We both still get our share of Sun.

Our "Share of Sun," and if dark days
O'er-shadow oft our wintry ways,
We both can bide the Coming Spring,
For you shall flower and I shall sing.

Nor need we trouble if the throng
Forgets your flowers and my song;
If the Gods give but sun-lit days
We shall not miss a blind world's praise.

Fortune's rich gifts oft dearly paid,
And even Fame—like flowers must fade;
What sweeter dreams could Hope invent
Than lives made happy by—Content?

So you and I shall go our gait,
Nor envy once the Gilded Great,
And if the days but sunshine bring,
Then you shall flower—and I shall sing.

Hate, Envy, Doubts and harrowing Care
The Palaces of Earth shall share;
Tho' bleak winds blight the proudest rose
The Chick-weed's stars still dare the snows.

The sun that gilds the king's high halls
As brightly on my Cabin falls;
Peace, a more gracious gift than Power,
So I shall sing—and you shall flower.

No marble halls my shelter now,
No "laurels" proud adorn my brow;
This Chick-weed at my cabin door
Best fits a Woodland Troubadour.

Yet modest as thy merit seems,
Thy blooms shall out-last all life's dreams,
When even Fame forgotten long,
Thy stars survive the Laureate's Song

THE QUEST OF THE HAPPY ISLES!

Long leagues from land, in sight no strand,
  What seek ye on the Silent Sea?
No silvery beach these billows reach
  Though winds are blowing fresh and free;
Through cloudy drifts no headland lifts
  Its rocky crests to meet the skies,
Beyond the roar of waves no shore
  Within the ken of keenest eyes.

No drifted dunes fence dark lagoons,
  No palm trees quiver in the breeze;
For days and weeks no rugged peaks
  Rise dim above these empty seas;
Your yearning eyes may sweep the skies,
  From East to West from North to South,
Yet gleams in sight no beacon's light.
  The pilot finds no harbor's mouth.

To Love's fair isles how many miles?
  What length of leagues, how can I say?
Your pilot Hope might blindly grope
  A thousand and yet miss the way.
His flag unfurled defies the world
  Of warring water near and far,
And through the drift of clouds that lift
  He smiling marks Faith's Polar Star;

A bright sign set to show that yet
  Love hath a guide beyond this life,
An Eden Land on whose far strand
  The billows never break in strife;
Where flowery calms beneath the palms
  Welcome the storm-tossed wanderer home,
And Beauty's breast allures to rest
  The heart that never more shall roam.

O, hearts of fire that never tire,
  That storms nor seas can daunt or break,
Spread your bold sail to every gale,
  And follow love for love's own sake;
Your guiding star still gleams afar,
  No land to North—South—East or West,
But no waves whelm with Hope at helm,
  And storms at last shall sink to rest.

Though levins leap and billows sweep,
  Though shoreless still the deeps may roll,
No happier fate than thus to shape
  Life's course toward the Golden Goal;
A Heaven exempt from Gods that tempt
  With fruits forbidden of blind desire;
Where Mercy, and not Hate, shall stand
  To open wide the gates of Fire.

Who never shall never share
    The highest gifts the Heavens grant;
No timid soul can reach the goal,
    But Death the Bravest cannot daunt:
When far—not near shines Glory's Star,
    When threaten storms to overwhelm,
And thro the dark no Beacons spark,
    'Tis then—the Hero—finds the Helm.

MORE "GRACE" THAN "GRUB".

Oh, Lord we thank thee in advance,
For this—perhaps our only chance,
And whether fat, or whether lean,
  Or whether tender, Lord, or tough,
After we've licked the platter clean,
  Thank heaven, if only half enough.

LAKE ESTELLE, FLORIDA.

Green glooms are the orange groves yonder
In whose dusk shine stars fragrant and fair;
My fancies no further would wander
Than these shores, where the mid-winters wear
Half the tints of the summers that faded
To gold when November grew sere;
Even March with sweet blossoms is braided,
And April sheds never a tear.

Not yet show our laurels their lustre
That rivals the lily's white gleam,
But March cometh soon, you may trust her
To ripen the buds that still dream;
Only dream of the days that are burning
With blossoms still hushed into sleep.,
Winter ends, and with April's returning
The South wind breathes over the deep.

The Loltees and Lurlines, that cowerd
In gray grottoes deep under the waves
Now, knowing that Jessamines have flower'd,
Catch glimpses far down in their caves
Of the sun's golden showers that stipple
Their dusk with a dusting of stars,
As they hark to the lilt of the ripple
That breaks into song on the bars
Of silvering sands, close embracing
The bluest of heavens that tell
Every blossom and bower enlacing
The green girdled shores of Estelle.

Beneath the wide fans of Palmettoes
Let us dream of the shadows that woo;
The Yucca unsheathes his stilettoes
To guard us from Hates that pursue;

Shut out the bleak North with its wailing
  Of tempest, its turmoil and tears,
Spread our sails to soft winds; we are sailing
  With Love, Hope the pilot who steers,
And Heaven perchance is the Haven;
  If not, there are Edens below,
Though the soul that is cautious and craven
  May miss the gifts Godheads bestow.

See, there in the deep as it darkles
  Bluer skies than the heavens above,
Far under the firmament sparkles;
  Plunge in, win some Loltee—and Love;
What is death but the end of our dreamings?
  This guides to the Dawning of Days
That bring us, not life's sordid schemings,
  But the Deed that no doubting delays.

Here we grope in a gray world of visions,
  Loves and hopes that but flower to fade;
But There—are the homes of Elysians,
  And Doubt and Despair stand dismayed.
Green girdled thy shores that surround me,
  Lake Estelle, with Palmettoe and Pine;
Here no fears and no phantoms have found me,
  Only Loltees and Lurlines divine.

Magnolias gleam darkly above me,
  But her "laurels" I leave to Estelle;
Not Glory, but the Graces shall love me
  If I woo, not too wisely, but well.
See, down in the clear depths far under
  There open blue heavens of bliss!
If the Deeps woo'd me down would I sunder
  From the lures of a Lost World like this?

THE REQUIEM OF REST!

To-day so full of life and lust;
To-morrow—only dust to dust.
To-day a world to have and hold;
To-morrow under graveyard mould.
To-day a world of wealth for spending;
To morrow empty hands for lending.
To-day life's share of bliss and bloom;
To-morrow Lethe's shores of gloom.
To-day both sighs and laughter blent.
To-morrow Silence eloquent.
To-day the lips that bid Love come;
To morrow even Hope grows dumb.
To-day a thousand plans and schemes:
To-morrow sleep too deep for dreams.
To-day the question and the quest;
To-morrow unremember'd Rest.
To-day life's vigil still to keep;
To-morrow an unbroken sleep.
To-day the shadows that increase;
To-morrow an unending peace.
To-day Life conquers, so Love saith;
To-morrow—victory in death.
To day dim Hopes of things afar;
To-morrow—is it but Hope's star?
To-day the struggle of caged wings;
To-morrow—what Tomorrow brings!
To-day its share of sighs and sorrow;
The Requiem of Rest—Tomorrow!

TUMBLIN' FUN!

Came ever a merrier, madder brook
From rocky niche in a mountain nook?
And slipping and sliding, how it shook
Its silvering sides with laughter,
Growing ever daft and dafter,
As out of the Shadow into the Sun,
With a lissom leap came—Tumblin' Fun.

Where the firstling flash of its fountain gushes
The Nyxies have woven a cradle of rushes,
And above where many a foam-flake swims
The Naiads have knotted green leaves and limbs,
Where over the cascades dancing snows,
Lo! the blush of the Appalachian Rose;—
And twisting and turning,---and chuckling and churning,
Out of the Shadows into the Sun,
As wild as Wine comes—Tumblin Fun.

He comes with a writhe and a wriggle
From under the flowers and ferns;
With a gush and a gurgle—and giggle,
He twists, and twines and turns;—
And as you look, and listen,
See the eddies that gleam and glisten,
And under the ledges grim and gray
Mark the flying stream as it sweeps away
Into milky mist where the Rainbows Bridge
Spans the sunless shadows from ridge to ridge.

* * *

Now Tumblin' Fun, with his race half out,
Takes a longer leap with a louder shout,
Over the verge of the giddiest crags,
Where the sheeted foam like torn battle flags,

Hangs like a hawk on warring wings;
With a cry like the echoeing thunder flings:
So the giddy dance down the gorges steep,
Like the fall of an Alpine avalanche,
Of white thunders that seem to shiver and blanche,
Yet never a pause, as it plunges deep
Into the depths where dark shadows sleep,
Dusky and dim at the sunniest noon—
As when stars at night outshine the moon:
Down from the towering heights above,
Like a lover leaping to greet his love,—
Out of the glitter into the gloom—
Where echoes linger and phantoms loom,—
With half of his league-long life out-run,
Comes, wrestling with rainbows,—Tumblin' Fun.

There out of the gloom and into the glow,
Wearing above him wreaths of snow
(Stainless plumes in the dauntless crest
Of the fearless Knight, who hath battled best,)
Thro' the widening ravine where the hemlock spires
Catch the last farewell of the Sunset fires;—
When the level meadows are green with grass,
And broader reaches the blue skies glass;—
Where lances of Maize, shake gay tassels over
Cardinal flowers, and fields of clover:
As over the banks you lean and listen
To the ripples that gurgle, and gleam, and glisten
You can hear this wonderful mountain Elf
Chaffing and chuckling to himself,
Toying and joying with every bud,
That mirrors her beauty in his flood.

Thus comes Tumblin' Fun from the mountain spires
That first catch the kindling of the Dawn's faint fires;
With a league-long race that never flags,
Under the hemlocks and over the crags,—
Down to the placid pools where swim
The Nixies and Nymphs that wait for him:
Now kissing the Violet's blue eyes unchidden,
Tho' under leafed lids so shyly they're hidden;
Mocking and mirroring cliffs of Cloudland, and Skies,
Whispering Tales to the Trout where he lies,
Or in Fields of the Fairies, not forbidden—,
Jostles the Gentians, to open their eyes.

Thus ever heedless and headstrong still,
With never a thought of Miller or Mill;
Half forgotten his race down the ridges—
As he slyly slips under green banks and gray bridges;
So onward,—sunning himself the while,
His wild laughter melting now into a smile;
The rioting over, so near is the rest,
That the lily-pads hardly are rocked on his breast;
And the reaches still winding and widening—glass
The blue of the heavens and clouds as they pass:—
So with his race so nearly run,—
Riverward twinkling, with never an inkling
Of the turning of wheels, or the work to be done,
Half-sleeping, and creeping, glides—
Tumblin' Fun.

CUPID CRUCIFIED!

I strive to paint in fitting shape
The fancies of Love's earlier time,
But still the richest tints escape
That bravely colored passion's prime;
I cannot catch the golden gleams
That lit the paths that lovers trod,
And all those olden hopes and dreams
Lie buried under flowerless sod.

The lips that Faith once deified
Have long since wedded been to dust,
And Cupid hath been crucified,
And hearts have felt Hate's dagger thrust;
Remembrance is our deepest ill,
And endless life were endless loss,
For Love, the God, is writhing still
In agonies upon the Cross.

Happy the clown whose hunger needs
Only the flesh-pots, not the fire,
Who only sows the common seeds
That ripen into coarse Desire:—
Were Passion but a flower's flame
Up shooting from the sun-kissed clod,
Lust's gifts were all we'd care to claim,
Whilst mocking Love,—a Jealous God.

But shun the Sirens subtle snare,
Their lures to loss will surely lead;
Ever of Jealous Gods beware,
Their blisses make the blind heart bleed:
As Christ with mortal agonies quailed
Between two felons crucified,
So Cupid on a Cross is nailed
With Thievish Lusts on either side.

Doubt the God whose commandments bring
  The rankling stings of endless woes;
Edens, where Eves like Sirens sing,
  Show crowns of thorns on every Rose:
Safer life's toiling, than the toils
  False beauties weave to mesh poor man;
Around each kiss a serpent coils,
  And every bliss brings some new ban.

Mirth is a monarch debonair,
  With laughter laid upon his lips;
Hope, too, Joy's cast off robes may wear,
  And Faith forgets Fate's scorpion whips:
But Love is the Lost Thief deified
  By lunatics in love with loss;
Cupid at best, though crucified,
  Is but – a Coxcomb on a Cross!

Foolish lover, mark me, this the Sages tell,
Worship woman wisely, but if wisely, not too well.
  If you follow the tested text I preach,
  You'll trust but as far as your arms can reach:
    For there's nothing more fair, more fickle, more fond—
    Than a darling Brunette than a dainty Blonde.

LUCK'S LITANY.

Past troubles forgetting, future trials unsought,
Let us live unregretting and banish vain thought:
'Tis the moment that brings us every gift that adorns
If even to-morrow only harvests of thorns.

No victor can vanquish the conqueror—Death,
So waste not in wailing what's left us of breath;
Take the first kisses proffered, sip the bumpers that brim,
For to-morrow the Grave opens—narrow and grim.

If Sorrow and Pleasure both vanish so fast,
Whilst luck gives me leisure let us love to the last;
No treasures like Pleasure's, no wisdom like wine,
If Reason but measures the gifts that combine—

The most sweet with least sour: Though the Gods must be paid,
Would you trample Hope's Flower just because it must fade?
Will you sulk through the Summers because Winters are cold?
Trust me, often new-comers better friends than the old.

If the sun shines to-day be content with the gift
Though to-morrow the gray of the gloom shall not lift;
If after June's roses December's snows fall,
April's blossom uncloses at last for us all.

And if there's an ending to all of life's bliss,
Why stint less your spending, and gather in this
Short respite the Gods give, what harvest we may:-
See, even the clods live in flowers to-day.

So snatch from the hours a kiss to cure sighs;
To-day is still ours though to-morrow Love dies;
If Youth be so fleeting, if Life be so grim,
Though this the last meeting, fill Hope's cup to the brim.

Just because Love is fickle welcome all that he
brings,
And don't fool with Time's sickle, for that too has
stings;
If quite sure that to-morrow our lips shall be dumb,
To-day let us borrow Hope's joys as they come.

If a Heaven were surely the goal of life's race
We might bide more securely, and trust to God's
grace;
But as at life's ending we know but dumb Death,
Why stint not your spending as long as there's breath;

Nor miss present pleasures for the dubious bliss
Of those heavenly treasures the Saints, too, may
miss;
Indeed if all Priests to this Paradise go
Then there's even more need for some blisses below,

For that must be ever a tiresome place
Where Saints only endeavor to illustrate grace
By drawing long faces, and building a fence
To bar out all traces of good-feeling and sense.

If the promised Hereafter is really so grim,
No love and no laughter, only hymn after hymn,
As the sole dispensation, whilst still we have breath
Here claim compensation, and tickle Old Death.

We'll crown him with roses until life is spent,
And when the game closes perhaps he'll relent,
And give us some showing in a world not much
worse
Than this, where Luck's sowing, not always a curse.

The Sins I repent are the harmless joys missed,
The pleasures neglected, the kind lips unkissed;
And if a Hereafter, and a good God above,
His mandate is Peace, and his mission is love.

NEW YEARS AND OLD

'Tis Merry Christmas, so they say,
As such on faith I'll take it,
Though 'tis to me as sad a day
As memory can make it;
Bright visions of the Past arise,
And my sad heart remembers
The hopes and fears, the smiles and sighs
Of all those dead Decembers.

'Twere vain to hang the mistletoe,
No lips beneath it meeting
Will e'er recall the Long ago
When happy hearts were beating;
Both faith in Heaven and trust in Love
I then had, but 'tis over;
In those days I was hand and glove
With Luck, and lived in clover.

I had a Chateau ('twas in Spain),
And hopes and hearts in plenty,
But things have gone against the grain
Since I was one and twenty,
Blind Hope has learned at last to doubt,
And Love wields scorpion lashes;
Too soon the Yule Log glimmers out,
And leaves me only ashes.

For those who have both fires and furs
The Christmas Days seem jolly,
But in my cold heart memory stirs
And makes me melancholy;
No gobbler shall I gobble up,
Nor mince-pies mince thereafter,
Whilst filling high the crystal cup
With champaigne's liquid laughter.

But though the Christmas chimes awoke
  Faint echoes of past pleasures,
The New Years that my dreams evoke
  Are full of old time treasures,
Hope's Happy New Year, whose dawn breaks
  After Doubts dark December,
Shall bring me every gift that makes
  Hearts willing to remember.

Beneath unfading mistletoe
  I claim unfailing favors
Still the old roses bud and blow,
  The old love never wavers;
Again my heart takes holiday,
  And learns from Faith to borrow
The little (that is "much") to pay
  The debts we owe to-morrow.

Criss Kringle may leave empty socks,
  And Christmas wear no holly,
But faith fears not the storms and shocks
  That wreck more reckless Folly.
O, glad beneficence of Hope,
  A bud even frosts leave sappy
And sweet with dews from Heavens cope;
  New Years are always happy.

Like a "chill and a fever"—love is just a disease,
  Say the wisest Doctors who've studied the ill:
And their diagnosis with mine quite agrees,
  Only first comes the fever and later the chil.

SNOW DROPS VERSUS DROPS OF SNOW!

(A Florida Valentine.)

Saint Valentine of old, 'tis said,--
Be-headed, that is--"lost his head";
When warmly wooing fickle Fairs,
'Tis sure all lovers must lose theirs:

Hence lovers, who propose or pine;
As Patron Saint chose Valentine;
A headless Saint most surely fit
For Wooers--, sweetly lacking wit.

Indeed were this Saint wise and witty
Not long he'd abide in New York City,
At least while blizzards daily sent
To double--"Winter's Discontent,"--

Our shores can show you painted Conks
Brighter than blooms in all the Bronx;
Saint John here, too, can posies pick us
Unmatched in any Hortus Siccus.

Why stay to woo some frigid maid
Where rose and lily fall and fade?
Come breathe our breezes sun-lit balm
Beneath green Parasols of Palm.

Our groves are green, our gardens gay,
Tho' yours reluctant still in May;
Our dainty Snow-drops bud and blow
When you have only Drops of Snow.

This day up North brings drifted snows,
But here we pluck the--Daily Rose;
Sheltered beneath green Palm and Pine,
Down South we greet--Saint Valentine.

WHISPER LOW!

(The River of Dreams.)

In the dim land of drowsing and dreaming,
At dark when the winds crisper blow,
Lo, the light where far ripples are gleaming
On the River of Rest---Wisperlo.

Whisper low--whisper low--whisper lower,
Thus it winds thro' the woodlands away,
Thro' fields never sown by a sower,
Thro' wilds where no wanderers stray.

No castles show gray on the ridges,
No cottages down in the dales,
It's banks over arched by no bridges,
No villages cumber its vales.

It's sluggish tides never keep turning
The wheels of Wealth's merciless Mills,
Where limpingly Labor is learning
Life's lore, and the lesson that kills.

No palaces gilded or golden
Where the Princes of Piracy dwell,
No spires, time-honored and olden,
Where Priests serve the Devil so well.

Wisperlo-- is a dark flowing river,
Winding far thro' a desert of dreams;
It's ripples that silvering quiver
A Lethe for life and its schemes.

It is cradled in hills, not Highlands,
From lost Lowlands it lapses to seas
Where shores are black belted by islands
Unswept by the breath of a breeze.

A land of shores dim and uncertain,
  Phantom beaches and far-fading capes--
That drifting clouds cap--or uncurtain,
  A wild land of weird shifting shapes.

In the dusk, when the breezes blow crisper,
  And her harvest of stars Night shall show,
In this lost Land of Dreams--hark the whisper
  Of this River of Rest--Wisperlo.

Thro' a dim land, where twilight is falling,
  As rose petals fall after frost,
Faint echoes of old hopes seem calling
  To hearts in life's gray gloaming lost.

Beyond the wide reach of the levels
  Of a land that is sombre and sere,
Like the song of a mad Sea that revels--
  In storms,--are the chaunts that I hear.

'Tis the sigh of the surges, that wailing
  Wait and watch for the Ending they know,
When Shadow Ships ever go sailing
  Down the darkness of dim Wisperlo.

Where Life is a lesson forgotten,
  And Love is a legend untold,
Where the Barrens of Death are begotten,
  And Winds of the Waste blowing cold.

Lo, the whispering River that never--
  Again shall leave memory free,
Till its dusky tides vanish forever
  In dumb depths of the measureless Sea.

March 28 1906

LIVING IN CLOVER!

You may rave about ripe Roses,
  And the Lily's queenly graces,
But give me rustic posies
  Growing wild in woodland places.

And when the days grow fairer,
  And the thunder-showers loom,
Where are gardens rich and rarer
  Than the Clover-fields in bloom?

Oh, the Clover, purpling Clover,
  Where the bees are humming through,
When the Wintry winds are over,
  And the skies a blaze of blue.

Keep your Lilies for pale ladies,
  And your Roses for proud queens,
But for me the woods where shade is,
  And gay blossoms midst the greens.—

The Violets in the hedges,
  Blue Gentians by the streams,
And in the woodland edges
  All the blossoms of Hope's dreams.

And when the Sunset trailing
  Long shadows on the grass,
And the Golden Day is paling
  Like forgotten loves that pass;

Then by some green field sloping
  Twilight stars are shining over,
Here's a "night-cap" to you, hoping
  You may laugh, and Live in Clover!

THE OLD-FASHIONED GIRL!

: the *True* Girl, but the *New* Girl
Is the popular fad now;
:'s ashamed of her mother,
Always shocked at her Dad now;
fact the old folks are
Discreetly kept hidden,
st her beaux should discover
Old fashions forbidden:—
t as for me, tho' it may prove me a churl,
I confess I prefer still—the Old-fashioned Girl.

e New Girl can lead you
A dance when she chooses,
id a round dance quite sure
She never refuses:—
you doubt that your head
Can be turned in a minute,
st risk a wild Walk
And you'll soon find you're in it:
:t despite the delights of this wonderful whirl,
onfess I prefer still—the Old-fashioned Girl.

a drive in a buggy
When two mean close squeezing,
l confess the New Girl
Is prodigiously pleasing,
r she's not a bit shy,
And puts blindly reliance
what some might well call
An "entangling alliance";
it despite her attractions that make my head whirl,
y faith I pin still—to the Old-fashioned Girl.

Yes, the Old-fashioned Girl,
Not so rapid and rushing,
Who has not quite forgotten—
The secret of blushing;
The Old-fashioned Girl
Quite content with *one* lover,
Not prying and trying—
New beaux to discover;
Tho' no doubt this fast fair one, a peach and a pear
Far safer and sweeter the—Old-fashioned Girl.

The Old-fashioned Girl
Who is sterling and steady,
The Old-fashioned Girl
Who's romantic and ready
To run away, not
With the last man she knew,
But still to her first
Girlish fancy quite true
When round her my arms I so lovingly furl,
You just bet I'll hold fast to my—Old-fashioned Girl.

I would you were a Drop of Dew,
And I a Beam from yonder Sun,
No other lips could sip of you,
Believe me, after I had done.

Love makes that Lamester Time pass swiftly by
A pastime sweet, no lover would deny:
But every year leaves some hopes dead, alas,
And vengeful Time, in turn, makes love, too, pass.

THE WINTER'S WORTH!

ıy what you will of Summer's Rose,
Of leafing trees, or birds that sing,
'is Winter—winnows from his Snows
The gifts that gladden every Spring!

he wildest winds that sweep the seas
Are those that nerve the bravest souls,
nd Love foregoes Life's noblest pleas
Where only pallid Peace controls.

Tis when the Storm most fiercely beats,
And threatening waves would overwhelm
'here 'mid the wreck of sinking fleets,
First the True Pilot finds the helm.

Say what you will; 'tis not the days
When Joy fills high the brimming bowl,
But when War's lethal lightenings blaze
The Hero—searching—finds his soul.

The South Winds' balmy breath may bring
The fragrance of a thousand flowers,
But 'tis the North Winds' bolder wing
That soars to realms where Glory towers.

Forget the golden days of June
When Joy led Justice far astray,
And listen to the wilder rune
The wintry winds shall chaunt to-day.

No "Winter of sad Discontent"
Is this, but days of Stern—yet Strong;
No Easter Tide, but such a Lent
As bravely teaches Right from Wrong.

And tho' we pluck no blushing Rose,
Nor hearken to glad birds that sing,
'Tis Winter winnows from his Snows
The gifts that gladden every Spring!

LYCE!

Had you quaffed at the Springs of the Don
  Where it flows through the wilds cold and icy,
With your cheek like the snow, and your blood like
    its flow,
  You scarcely could colder be, Lyce.
Hark, your bolted door shakes in the blast
  That strips the last leaves from your garden;
Here I stand and implore for a kiss, nothing more,
  And your heart must be cold if it harden.
Nay, the Venus of Milo, in stone,
  Would scarcely show such a cold shoulder;
Lyce, open your door to the graces once more
  E'er the past and its memories moulder.
Art thou proof against presents and prayers?
  Shall an old lover lack for scant pity?
Pierian of old, as this wind thou art cold,
  Grown the frostiest flirt in the city.
Were thy heart like the heart of an oak,
  Were thy blood as a serpent's, remember
That Juno herself would not keep a poor elf
  Dancing thus at her door in December.

THE TEMPEST'S TEST.

I love the gloom of sunless skies
Where not one glimpse of Heaven's blue eyes
Foretell Love's benediction;
Through shifting shadows dark and dim,
When all the world seems gray and grim,
'Tis then that stern conviction,
Unlured by Fancy's frolic course,
Finds time to gather faith and force,
Unwon by Hope's seductive song,
Measurers the depths of Right and Wrong.
When skies are clear and sunbeams sift
Down Life's wide stream—we aimless drift,
But, when the waves would overwhelm,
First the true Pilot finds the helm.

THE ROSE LOVER!

For me too high the stars above,
The Pearls too deep below,
Half-way I find my earthly love
In vales where roses grow.

The towering heights are cold and bare,
Cloud-caped, and crowned with snows,
But when in woodland paths I fare
I find the budding Rose.

And if there be some hidden thorns
About her beauty set,
Their prudish sharpness wisely warns
The passions that forget.

And thus my blushing beauty keeps
Her fragrance hidden still,
Until when first the moonlight peeps
Above the woodland hill;—

I, stealing down by silent ways,
Surprise her e'er she knows;
The Lily let her lovers praise,
But I shall love—the Rose.

The Rose—whose thorns all others daunt,
Set sharp when rivals woo,
But guard the graces that enchant
One lover tried and true.

I seek no Stars in alien skies
No Pearls in stormy Seas;
And when at last my Sweet Rose dies,
Should Heaven hear my pleas;—

Find me beneath the woodlands gray
A couch for soft repose,
Where, if the Gods be good, I may
Sleep—dreaming of my Rose.

DICK AND THE DEVIL!

The Devil came to digger Dick,
And claimed that he must have his pick
Of all the crops that he plowed or planted;
And knowing it were vain to kick
Against the mandates of Old Nick,
Dick straight replies: 'Tis granted!

But still you'll own 'tis only fair
To say what half shall be your share,
Above God's ground, or under it?
The Devil said at once: 'The top;'
So Dick potatoes chose as crop,
Which left the Devil not a bit.

The Devil seeing now his blunder,
Next claimed all crops he might find under
Good ground, and Dick this claim to meet
Put in a sowing of wheat.
At harvest time returned Old Nick
Expecting now a better—half,
Yet got the roots and not the rick,
Which surely made the angels laugh.

Unless you wisely plan the way
You'll surely find the "devil's to pay"
For any trading with Old Nick;
But still theres truth in our fable
An honest man is always able
To trump the Devil's sharpest trick.

THE DAILY COACH!

an's life is like a Daily Coach,
That goes up hill and down dale—travelling,
ne load oft heavy, heaven knows,
But what's the use of crusty cavilling?
ur Driver surely knows the way
nd will not go too far astray,—
nd if some tired Tramp you meet,
hy give the poor chap half a seat.

on't let life's worries wear and warp
Your soul, my friend, too early,
void the road to Grumble Thorp,
Where all are sour and surly;
on't give old Double-tongue a lift
Should you by mischance meet him,
at should you find poor Love adrift,
Why, take him in and greet him.

ould you pass Lords and Ladies gay
In chariots out airing,
ield willingly the wider way,
Theres road enough for sharing;
or envy fools a fortune spent,—
Worth is not rank or riches;
o wealth buys friendship or content,
And Dukes may die in ditches.

eave Luck his gilded coach-and-four
To hold the haughty highway,
hen silly Pride and Pomp approach,
Far better take a by-way;—

Not where the painted Palace stands
  Shall hearts find happy shelter,
But far afield in leafy lands
  There's kindness in good kelter.

So drive your road, the lightest load
  The lightest heart oft carries;
With modest gains, go seldom pains,
  And Hatred seldom tarries
In Homes where Envy finds lean fare,
  By Power and Pelf untempted;—
Of hopes you'll house a double share,
  And half your sins exempted.

A Lie may start with barely an inch,
  But wait and with even an Ell:
And when it comes at last to the pinch,
  It would take the Devil to tell
    The difference between the birth of it
    And the honest weight and worth of it.

Behold the Lilies of the field, they never toil
    or spin,
  (So said the Lord) and Solomon could hardly
    equal these;
Yet now the Sour Saints denounce my idleness
    as sin,
  Tho' like these Lilies of the Lord, I merely
    take my ease!

"Man needs but little here below",
    But when he pays the price,
Surely a wise God ought to know,
    He—wants that Little Nice!

THE CALL OF THE SEA !

I have wandered from the Highlands,
When the brooklet sings its glees,
To the dusky, white-beached islands
By the shores of shining Seas.

I have roamed far from the verges
Of the Up-lands leafy vales,
To where across the surges—
Gleam afar the sun-lit sails.

I have left the rocky ledges
Of the ridges that I knew,
And am drifting mid the sedges
Where the water-lilies grew.

In my shallop further sailing
I reach the shoreless Sea,
And hear the stormy wailing
Of the waves that wait for me.

* * * * * *

The wanton waves are wooing
A Rover to his rest;
Love, alas, is life's undoing—
When a Mermaid is your guest.

A sea-Nymph softly sighing,
Once loved, but long forgot,
But now when Day is dying,
She lures me to her grot.

Farewell, O, Sunlit Summits,
Farewell, O, Valleys fair;--
Too deep for any plummets—
My love, and my Despair.

HEROICS!

In battle 'taint the fightin'
  But gittin' killed what flurries me:
In a shower, 'taint the rain you know,
  But gittin' wet what worries me;
'Taint the whiskey what I mostly miss,
  But the feelin' fat and funny;
I don't objec' to bein' poor,
  But what I mind's the—Money.

I'd never cuss, I'd never kick,
  Ef things was allers fair,
An' the Good Lord guv me just the pick;
  I only wants—my share.
I only want a showin',
  Ef it's jorum, jupe or jig;
When the pan begins a fryin'
  I wants my slice of pig,
A bit of all thats goin',
  The Leetle an' the Big.

I don't care how you share 'em,
  Ef you'll allers share 'em so
As I gits jes what I wanted
  In this little Wale uv Woe.
Tho' I ain't no Saint a tryin'
  To guv the Lord a show,
Yet I ain't afeerd of uv dyin'

  (Not in battle—but in bed)
Ef it wasen't them pesky chances
  Uv stayin'—so long—dead.
In fack, ter paint the picter,
  An' guv you all the fax,
I wants ter git the INCOME.
  But—I hates ter pay the TAX!

—Creesus Joans

A ROMANCE OF THE ROSES!

White roses on her breast,
Tea-roses in her hair,
Red roses softly rest
On her cheeks blushing, where
Kisses I press so oft
Though she cries shyly—hush!
Whispering low and soft
Lest that white rose should blush,
As it would should it discover
That this lady had a lover.

White roses pale as pearls
Pressed to her beating heart,
Ruddy rose that unfurls
When her glad lips impart
Secrets I would not tell,
Whispers I would not share
Even with buds that fell
Tossed from her golden hair;
Lest these blossoms might betray us,
Or with vengeful thorns delay us.

Tea-roses in her hair,
White roses on her breast,
Are they not whispering there
Secrets that Love confessed?
Yet when these lips I press
Blushing she bids me go,
Lest that fair rose should guess
Half the things lovers know,
And my burning vows she hushes
Lest these blooms should read her blushes,

Red roses ripe and rich,
Matched with the lips I press;
Dainty tea-roses which
Fetter'd by some fair tress
Falling in golden strands
Down on her bosom's snow,
Where some bold lover's hands
Finds where white roses blow:
Then behold, Love's lesson learning,
Every blossom crimson turning.

PIERIS!

(SYLVESTER BELLS.)

Down, where the valley's brooklet gushes,
Sweet Rose, bewitches with her blushes
In June all comers;
Fair Lily, too, so tall and slender,
Hath wooers too who homage render
Through sunlit summers.
But not your gayest garden flowers
Can match with those I find above
On the high summits that I love,
Buds nursed to life by mountain showers.
There on the lofty heights that loom
Above the blue world far below you,
Pieris fair shall proudly show you
The wonder of her snows in bloom;
Finer than all your heath and heather,
A thousand milk white bells together.

THE REALM OF ROSES!

The New Year in Florida opens like Spring,
In wild woodlands the violet uncloses,
No wonder by moonlight the mocking birds sing
In this wonderful Realm of the Roses.

Where over the roof-tree the white roses climb,
And red roses girdle the garden;
Ah, here in this soft, sunny, sensuous clime—
Love condemns only hearts that would harden.

Like the mocking-bird, lured by the sunlight I sing
In gardens still painted with posies,
And a winterless welcome to New Year I bring
In Florida,—Realm of the Roses.

If sunbeams should fail for a moment to shine
Clouds would bring out a thunder-gust pelting,
For here in this land of the Palm and the Pine,
Even Winter has moods that are melting.

December dies out like a sunset of gold,
Give him farewells half sad and half tender,
But welcome to the New Year, whose banners unrolled
Almost rival the mid-summer's splendor.

Not wrap'd in the ermines of winter he comes,
No icy winds battle and bluster;
Nay e'er long shall the snow of flowering plums,
And the blush of the peach gather luster.

For here in fair Florida's pine-pillar'd plain,
With maidens to guide him, not Moses,
The Promised Land soon shall each true lover gain
In this sun-cinctured Realm of the Roses.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST!

What step upon my threshold falls?
What unknown voice is this that calls?
Too late, I'll not unlock my gate
What e'er befalls.

Who cometh through the shadows gray?
If wanderer lost or reveller gay,
Belated rover day is over,
Farewell away!

A voice in accents soft replies:
I visit men in various guise,
There are who name my favors Fame—
Yet tell no lies.

And others, craven hearts are these,
Call me Despair; life's bitterest lees
They'd rather drain in pallid pain
Than hear my pleas.

Some call me Darkness, and some—Doubt;
Few welcome me with song and shout,
Gray hairs or gold, the young or old,
Would bar me out.

Yet there are some, these know me best,
Who, giving welcome, call me—Rest;
At set of sun why should they shun
A silent guest?

And there are souls of essence fine
That call me Love, and bid me twine
My cypress sprays with life's green bays:
Their hearts are mine.

But whether hut or whether hall,
Love's wicket or his Lordship's wall,
Doors open at my breath, for I am Death
Who comes to all.

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